

Margaret Russell Paton

Matron of St Faith's Hostel

Born in London, Margaret Paton was one of five children. Sadly, she was just four years old when both their parents died, and the children were split up. Little Margaret was fostered out and at the tender age of six, all alone, was sent to school in Warminster, where she stayed until she was seventeen.

She was then sent to Plymouth to do a secretarial course. When she had completed it, she went back to Warminster to work in a seed merchants office. Frustrated at having made none of these decisions herself and having a restless spirit, Margaret decided to take her future into her own hands. She accepted a job looking after a clergyman's children, which took her to the wilds of the Australian outback.

Eventually after returning to England and extending her education she ended up working in Coventry at Saint Faith's hostel, where she stayed for 39 years. She initially accepted the position of Assistant Matron, helping people in need or distress, including single girls who were pregnant and married women who lived with violence.

Margaret was appalled by the harsh way St Faiths was run. As a compassionate person, when she was eventually put in charge of the home she ran it in a far more relaxed and caring manner, treating people who were troubled with kindness and respect, in return gaining their trust and admiration.

Her dedication and hard work were recognised when in 1960 she received an MBE from the Queen, followed by the City of Coventry Award of Merit, which was gifted to her in 1966. She was a member of Soroptimist International of Coventry and served as President in 1969-70.

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